



BONHOMME RICHARD'S *ALMANAC*

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"I have not yet begun to fight!"



CHARGE BOOKS GIVE NEW CHIEFS THE BIG PICTURE OF WHAT TEAMWORK MEANS

Story by JO1 Robert Garnand

When newly selected Chiefs start their initiation and training, one of the first projects they are tasked with is making their Charge Books.

In initiating its second group of CPO selectees since it was commissioned on August 15, 1998, USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6) is continuing a tradition of the way Charge Books will be done onboard.

So what is the tradition?

Command Master Chief Anthony Calhoun said, "Last year the initiation committee provided guidance to the new CPO selectees, as they did this year, instructing them to be creative and develop a Charge Book that each could cherish for the rest of their life. They were instructed," he continued, "to create Charge Books that fostered team building, cohesiveness, esprit de corps and that they must make a complete picture when all Charge Books are placed side by side."

"Last year's group created Charge Books that, when placed together, formed the present USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6)," said Calhoun. "This year's group decided on creating Charge Books that form the frigate BONHOMME RICHARD which was commanded by Captain John Paul Jones."

Master-At-Arms Chief Andrew Stringer, a new Chief Petty Officer, said

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This year's new Chief Petty Officers onboard USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6) chose to make their Charge Books collectively form the picture of the original USS BONHOMME RICHARD commanded by Captain John Paul JONES. 18 Sailors were selected to become Chief Petty Officers. (Photo by PH3 Timothy Comerford).

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of the Charge Books, "Having all of the books join to create one theme is the basis behind the whole team effort. Without one of us," he went on to say, "the whole picture is incomplete. This way of doing Charge Books shows how we all stand and work together to fulfill the time honored tradition of the CPO community."

Stringer said he carved the books and put them together with the help of some of the selectees while other selectees worked on different tasks for their CPO training.

"We all used our talents to take care of certain tasks to get the job done as a whole," Stringer said. "That's what makes up a team."

"By just having a piece of the ship's silhouette on each Charge Book," said Master Chief Gerardo Fernando, "they have to be united and apply teamwork."

"Twenty-five years down the road," said Calhoun, "these Chiefs will pick up their Charge Books and see only a piece of the ship and it's going to force them to remember that there were other shipmates they were initiated with and that they worked together as a team."

This year's new Chief Petty Officers are:

ABFC(AW) Lawrence Warford; AGC(AW) Dale Mang; CTC(SW) Gregory Hutton; CRTC(SW) Ralph Lambert; EMC(SW) Joseph King; EMC(SW) Larry Monzon; ETC(SW) Katy Gast; FCC(SW) Dale Shelinbarger; FCC(SW) Theodore Weiler; HTC(SW) Gary Long; ICC(SW) Robert Smith; MAC(SW) Andrew Stringer; MSC(SW) Eduardo Custudio; MSC(SW) Denise Hurst; MMC(SW) Rob Kallman; MMC(SW) Buz Phillips; RMC(SW) Taylor Forester; RMC(SW) Todd Gruchalla.



BONHOMME RICHARD'S ALMANAC

Capt. Douglas W. Keith, Commanding Officer
Lt. Cmdr. Laurie Rye, Public Affairs Officer
JOCS(SW) James Jackson, Asst. Public Affairs Officer
JO1 Robert W. Garnand, Editor

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Navy Achievement Medal Awardees for August Ammo Onload

A01 Daniel Keck
 MM2 Paterno Andaya
 AT2 Curtis Grandi
 FC2 Jeffrey Rucker
 AT2 Richard Smith
 AK2 Henry Sunglao
 AO3 Sarah Dekarske
 AS3 Aurelio Gaytan
 AT3 Quenton Gould
 AO3 Brian Tschannen
 AOAN Richard Griffith
 SN Adam Ward

GERALD R. FORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL VISITS

Story by JOCS(SW) James A. Jackson, III

USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD-6), the Navy's newest Amphibious Assault ship, and elements of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, hosted Gerald R. Ford Elementary School on board recently. As a part of the triangular adoption between the City of Indian Wells, USS BONHOMME RICHARD LHD 6 and Gerald R. Ford Elementary School more than 150 students and teachers came on board for their first visit and orientation on the "Revolutionary Gator."

Through the Navy's Partnership in Education Program, the ship's crew introduced students to amphibious warfare of the 21st Century. This was the second stage of a continuous working relationship between the three participants. In July the City of Indian Wells presented the ship a proclamation in recognition of its willingness to participate in such a program considering the distance between the ship and the school.

The students were given an in-depth tour of the ship including the ship's state of the art combat information center, helicopter direction center, landing force operation command center, newly installed satellite television studio and other state of the art equipment.

The day's event kicked off with students and crewmembers paying tribute to MIA's and POW's in a ceremony on the ship's flight deck. As new crewmembers, each student was given a USS BONHOMME RICHARD command ball cap.

The ship's crew will also recognize students of the quarter during the fall and spring semesters, and Sailors will mentor students in academic fundamentals. While the ship is at sea, language and writing skills will be advanced with the exchange of letters and e-mail between students and crewmembers.

With more than 1600 Marines from the 15th MEU embarked, students were also given an opportunity to view equipment used by the marines.

Under the command of Captain Douglas W. Keith, the ship has a crew of 66 Officers, 68 Chief Petty Officers and 931 enlisted personnel. USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD-6) is the sixth ship to be commissioned into the WASP (LHD-1) Class of U.S. Navy large-deck, multi-purpose amphibious assault ships. Built by Ingalls Shipbuilding, a division of Litton Industries in Pascagoula, Mississippi, she is capable of amphibious assault, as well as non-combatant evacuation and other humanitarian missions that have become a critical part of the modern Navy's mission.

The ship can embark, transport, deploy, command and fully support a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) of 2,000 Marines. It can carry a squadron of AV-8B Harrier II jets, as well as a full range of Navy/Marine Corps helicopters including CH-46 Sea Knight, CH-53E Super Stallion, AH-1W Super Cobra and amphibious vehicles. In addition, the ship carries Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCACs) that can "fly" out of the dry well deck as part of an amphibious assault.

Second in size only to super carriers, USS BONHOMME RICHARD has living area for nearly 3,200 crewmembers and embarked troops, including accommodations for nearly 230 female officers, chiefs, and enlisted personnel. The 40,500 ton ship has state-of-the art medical facilities, including six operating rooms, two dental X-ray rooms, an 18-bed IC unit and a 600-bed hospital. USS BONHOMME RICHARD will be the primary troop carrier and aircraft platform in a three ship Amphibious Ready Group (ARG). In addition to carrying the combat forces and the Task Force Commander, the Commander of the Amphibious Squadron and their staffs can also be embarked aboard BONHOMME RICHARD.

JUST ANOTHER DAY AT THE BEACH

Story by SSgt. Glenn Holloway, 15th MEU PA Chief

In their berthing areas in the belly of the ship, entombed by steel walls, floors and ceilings, the Marines of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit await their orders for the following day's mechanized raid.

Staff noncommissioned officers, a conglomerate from the various MEU assets, sit at a table, playing spades and watching The Comedy Channel. Conversations run the gamut from family and friends to world events. The laughter is loud and plentiful. Anything to keep away the boredom while they wait.

The fun stops when the company gunny walks in. The cards are put away and the grinning, idiotic face on the TV disappears.

Notebooks and pens magically appear in every hand. Gunny has the word for the first mission of the MEU's Composite Training Underway Exercise – the first no-holds-barred training period of its workups with the Bonhomme Richard Amphibious Ready Group.

Over a spread out "Camp Pendleton Special" map, SNCOs from 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion trace the primary and alternate routes to the objective. Grid coordinates are thrown out and plotted. The objective rally point is identified. Target assignments are given to the mortar section chief of Weapons Company, Battalion Landing Team 1/4. He breaks out his plotting board and begins figuring out the range and direction to the targets. Details, details, details ...

The next morning, from the womb of the Denver, gators emerge. Each of the 26-ton amphibians carries a load of combat-laden grunts.

The Marines of 1st Squad, 3rd Platoon, led by Sgt. Guy Seaman, 21, of See **ANOTHER DAY AT THE BEACH** page 5



Photos are Marines from B. Co., BLT 1/4 rushing toward their objective and then returning to awaiting assault amphibian vehicles from 3rd AAV Bn., during 15th MEU's recent COMPTUEX. (Photos by SSgt. Glenn Holloway).

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Dallas – all members of B Company, BLT 1/4 – adjust and wait as their 3rd Section, 3rd Platoon driver, PFC Paul Lopez, 25, McAllen, Texas, manipulates the assault vehicle through the swells. They rock and roll in the water, heading toward the beach. The inky blackness inside the track, the smell of diesel, and the pitching and rolling make a few stomachs turn – no one loses it.

They aren't new at this. In fact, most of the Marines in the assault section have been together for more than two years, said section leader Sgt. Carlos Ledesma, 23, Stockton, Calif. They know each other and are a shining example of how "cohesion" should work. They all know the mission, and all know their role in that mission.

At the objective, the track comes to a halt. The ramp is lowered and in less time than it takes to score on the back of a bucking bull, the Marines are out and in positions.

The enemy, a group of about 30 rouge rebels from the country of "Russet," lies ahead along the lip of a small canyon. They are fast and mobile. They are a threat to the nearby village, also known as 25 Area Combat Town.

While the assault section bears down on the enemy position, another group of trackers and grunts blocks the rebels from entering the village.

The attack is fast and furious. With fire and maneuver, the assault section takes away all chances of the enemy's escape. They are neutralized – either dead or captured – no longer a threat to anyone. Almost as soon as it starts, it is over. The fire teams leap-frog their way back to the waiting tracks. The retrograde to the ship begins. The raid is a success.

Success means different things at different levels, Ledesma said. His section's performance is his reward.

"Everything went smooth, from the well-deck to the moment of execution. Everything was right on time ... my section is squared away. From the junior man to the senior, my Marines are all wired."



Assault Section Marines attack a group of rebels from the country of "Russet" in fireteam rushes. This mission was one of the first missions of the 15th MEU's Composite Training Underway Exercise held in conjunction with the BONHOMME RICHARD Amphibious Ready Group. (Photo by SSgt. Glenn Holloway).

FIREMAN AND HOSPITALMAN EARN ESWS PINS

Story by JO1 Robert Garnand

Earning an Enlisted Warfare designation is a big task in any Sailor's career. Two junior BONHOMME RICHARD Sailors have made a head start by earning their Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist (ESWS) designations early in their Navy careers.

Hospitalman James Abeyta of Mora, N.M. and Fireman Jason Gray of Gary, Ind. are those two junior Sailors.

Abeyta said what made him want to get ESWS qualified was because, "It's a good way to get know the ship and the different jobs taking place on the ship."

For Gray, getting ESWS qualified was for advancement in the future. He also said, "I was interested in learning

about the ship and all that goes on onboard."

Both Sailors said numerous people on the ship helped them while they worked on their ESWS qualifications.

In particular, Abeyta credited Dental Technician Second Class Mario Orozco. "He would quiz me on different ESWS topics and he helped me prepare for the qualification board."

Gray said studying with Machinist's Mate First Class Leo Andrade and Abeyta helped him out a lot. He also said, "My division gave me the opportunity during working hours to go watch the different evolutions I needed to have to get ESWS qualified." In addition, he credited Machinist's Mate Chief Robert Johnson, Machinist's Mate First Class Keith Crawford and Boiler Technician First Class Brian Martin for "their support and encouragement."

As of now, both Sailors are planning on making the Navy a career and already have some goals in mind.

"More than likely I'll make the Navy a career," Abeyta said. "My goal is to make Master Chief."

Gray said, "I'm interested in making the Navy a career. Right now I'm working in the Machinist's Mate rating and I just took the test for Petty Officer Third Class.

"Working as a Machinist's Mate involves a lot of hands on work on equipment and that's what I like," Gray said. "My Dad is in the steel mill industry and they work in an industrial environment and that's a lot like what the Machinist's Mate job is like," he added.

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Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist Fireman Jason Gray at work in the Aft Main Machinery Room. (Photo by PH3 Timothy Comerford).

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The next step for these junior Sailors is becoming Petty Officers and leaders for the Navy into the 21st Century.

Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist Hospitalman James Abeyta works on filling a prescription at USS BONHOMME RICHARD's Pharmacy. (Photo by PHAN Scott Webb).



BONHOMME RICHARD GETS FIRST UNIT AWARD

Story by JOCS(SW) James A. Jackson, III and Photo by PHAN Scott Webb

The Navy's newest amphibious warship has earned another first by recently winning the annual Wellness Unit Award the (Green "H"). The "Green H" recognizes commands that promotes health and fitness of active duty sailors in the Naval Surface Force. A Green "H" will be prominently painted on the ship's bridge wing.

The command's medical programs related to wellness such as safety, preventive medicine, injury prevention, physical fitness/exercise programs, and tobacco cessation program are some areas covered under the Annual Wellness Unit Award.

The citation reads in part, "You are to be commended for the outstanding initiative that you have developed to improve the health wellness of your command. Command directed physical training three times a week and the strong stance that you have taken regarding tobacco cessation are examples of how health promotion can have a direct impact on command readiness".

Only in commission for one year the ship's medical department has taken a very pro- active approach to providing health care to the more one thousand sailors who serve onboard and the 2,500 marines who embark USS BONHOMME RICHARD for major exercises and deployments.

HMCS(FMF/SCW) Don Parker, LCPO for the medical department said "Our primary purpose is to provide safe and optimal care for all of our patients, to treat all patients and staff with dignity and respect. Shipboard life is very challenging however we try to maintain a safe and therapeutic environment for both patients and staff. We also try to ensure the maintenance of an efficient working medical department for personnel assigned to military sick call and to use patient contact

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representative in handling all perceived and/or actual problems encountered by patients seen in our facility."

According to Senior Chief Parker the entire medical department played a role in helping the command earn the Green 'H'. LT Stacie Daniels was the overall coordinator of the program, and along with myself, attended several seminars that we used to lay the ground work for our program on USS BONHOMME RICHARD," he said.

Using medical surveys provided by the crew, the medical department put together a comprehensive health promotion program, that included several elements: Traditional Health Promotion nutrition, physical fitness and sports, tobacco use prevention and cessation, stress management, back fitness, weight management and alcohol and drug abuse prevention; Health Protection environmental and occupational health, and injury control; Preventive Services women's and men's health, immunizations, back fitness, cholesterol and hypertension screening and control, cancer prevention and mental and spiritual health.

"We are very excited about winning this award", said Senior Chief Parker "however, we are looking at winning it again next year. To win it two years in a row would be a good indication that the crew is really on board with the program."



TELEVISION AND RADIO DIRECT TO SAILOR

Story by JOCS(SW) James A. Jackson, III

During BONHOMME RICHARD's recent three month PSA several new system installations occurred. One of the major ones was Direct To Sailor Television and Radio (TV-DTS).

Direct To Sailor television is a dual satellite dish system that gives BONHOMME RICHARD the ability to receive live television underway. SATNET programming will be a thing of the past. No longer will the Super Bowl be aired three weeks after the office pool winner has collected his winnings.

Of course, with all good things come some limitations. The TV-DTS system only has two satellite receivers. Regardless of how many live programs are available, only two can be aired at a time.

Despite what one might have heard, adding additional channels would be extremely expensive to the command and would only be useful while operating off the coast of Southern California. For ex-

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ample, the Boeing antenna system is designed to receive the signal from Direct Broadcast Satellite such as those used for Direct TV. As such, the antenna operates only in the KU Band. There is currently no KU Band satellite television service over the ocean regions, and accordingly this antenna would not receive programming in the Indian, Pacific and Atlantic Ocean regions. These regions are specifically serviced by TV-DTS, using the C Band.

The per-system cost is approximately \$500K, as compared to TV-DTS antennas at approximately \$35K. The TV-DTS system is currently the only system that will allow ship's at sea to receive a live global signal.

How Direct to Sailor (TV-DTS) works. A broadcast signal originating from the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service-Broadcast Center (AFRTS-BC), March Air Force Base, Riverside, Calif., is beamed up to three commercial satellites positioned around the globe. One floating in space over the Pacific, one over the Atlantic and one over the Indian ocean. As long as a ship is at sea within the signal's "foot-print," they can pick up the signal via satellite receiver and distribute it through the ship's Shipboard Information, Training and Entertainment (SITE) system to the TV's onboard.

What TV-DTS provides. TV-DTS provides timely news, information and entertainment to the fleet through two TV channels: AFRTS News/sports channel and AFN Direct to Sailors, a modified version of Armed Forces Network. It also provides two audio channels, and on BHR the radio channels are located at 99.1 and 102.1.

In addition, BHR also broadcasts two additional audio channels from its 2368/radio receivers which can be heard on FM channels 92 and 94.

A print data channel also is included which allows the ship to receive timely transmission of public affairs products such as the Current News Early Bird, Navy Wire Service, Stars and Stripes and the New York Times Fax. These entire features can be read daily on the ship's share drive in the early bird folder. The New York Times Fax will be printed and

distributed throughout ship on a daily basis when the ship is underway.

Here's a quick look at some of the many shows available from TV-DTS programming on both channels 3 & 4. The News/Sports Channel: Live Sports, Good Morning America, Sportscenter, 48 Hours, Dateline, 20/20, ESPN & ESPN2. AFN-Direct to Sailor: Oprah Winfrey, Star Trek: Deep Space 9, Wheel Of Fortune, Today, WWF Superstars, Home Improvement, Mad About You, Drew Carey, Frasier, 20/20, Tonight Show with Jay Leno, Saturday Night Live and Late Night with David Letterman.

TV-DTS is a quality-of-life initiative that will change the way Sailors living aboard ship get news and information.



MAC(SW) Andrew Stringer presented Mrs. Joyce Murtha, the ship's sponsor, with a time capsule. The time capsule contained various items from the ship's crew. (Photo by PHAN Scott Webb).